

Gen. Taylor Retiring

By MARIANNE MEANS

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WASHINGTON, March 24.—High administration sources disclosed today that U. S. Ambassador to South Viet Nam, Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, will retire in May.

Gen. Taylor, 63, stepped down from his post as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to become the President's man in troubled Saigon last June after Henry Cabot Lodge resigned. He told the President at that time that he wished to return to the United States when a year was up.

President Johnson, sources close to the White House report, has not yet made up his mind who will succeed Gen. Taylor. However, it is believed that the President's choice will be a man who comes with a high recommendation from Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and who is a career military officer or diplomatic expert on Southeast Asia.

One possibility to succeed Gen. Taylor is William P. Bundy, now Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. A brother of McGeorge Bundy, the President's special assistant for national security affairs, Mr. Bundy, 47, had served in the Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Department before his present State Department post.

Another possibility is U. Alexis Johnson, a career diplomat who was appointed Deputy Ambassador to South Viet Nam when Sen. Taylor was sent there as Ambassador. In any case, he is expected to remain in Saigon.

TOP POST

If anything, the post of U.S. Ambassador in Saigon has grown in importance the past year as President Johnson moved from a strategy of trying to head off Communist infiltration within South Viet Nam itself to one of bombing supply centers and routes inside North Viet Nam.

Administration officials report privately that the President intends to slowly increase pressure on Hanoi until the North Vietnamese show some willingness to negotiate a settlement. This means bombing raids on North Viet Nam will



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get steadily tougher and inch closer to Hanoi itself.

The President is known to want to avoid bombing Hanoi. But he feels that unless the Viet Cong are stopped now they will eventually overrun South Viet Nam.

Gen. Taylor returns to Washington, Sunday, for a conference with the President about progress in Viet Nam.

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